

OK \$5-Million for Construction Work At Joliet Arsenal

Work to Start Soon on Two Acid Units at Kankakee Unit

Another \$5 million project that will employ about 500 construction workers is expected to start within 30 days at the Kankakee Unit of Joliet Arsenal.

This announcement was made today by Col. Ronald B. Currans, commanding officer of the Arsenal, and J. E. Helquist, plant manager for United States Rubber company, which operates the Kankakee section for the Ordnance Corps.

TWO ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION units for the manufacture of oleum (concentrated sulfuric acid) will be erected, and some additional acid concentrating equipment will be installed, as soon as construction contracts can be awarded by the U. S. Corps of Engineers.

The Chicago District Engineer is expected to ask for bids on the work soon. Oleum, other concentrated acids; and toluene are main components of TNT.

Operation of the new facilities, which should be ready by fall, will not require many additional production workers, since most of the equipment used in an explosive works such as Kankakee is automatic. It was estimated that about 50 more employees may be needed.

THE TWO OLEUM UNITS to be installed are not new, having been recently shipped here from a surplus World War II government-owned plant. It was pointed out that a saving of about a quarter million dollars, as well as probably 9 months of time, will be effected by rehabilitating and using this equipment, rather than purchasing new machinery.

The original \$9 million rehabilitation program at Kankakee which began last spring is now about 90% completed. The plant has been back in production since June 1951, with only a part of its equipment in operation. About 1300 workers are now employed there, to produce TNT, DNT, and lead azide. Nearly all of them are employed by the operating contractor, U. S. Rubber.